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THE

HISTORY

OF

Jonathan Griffin and William Peterſon.

POINTING OUT

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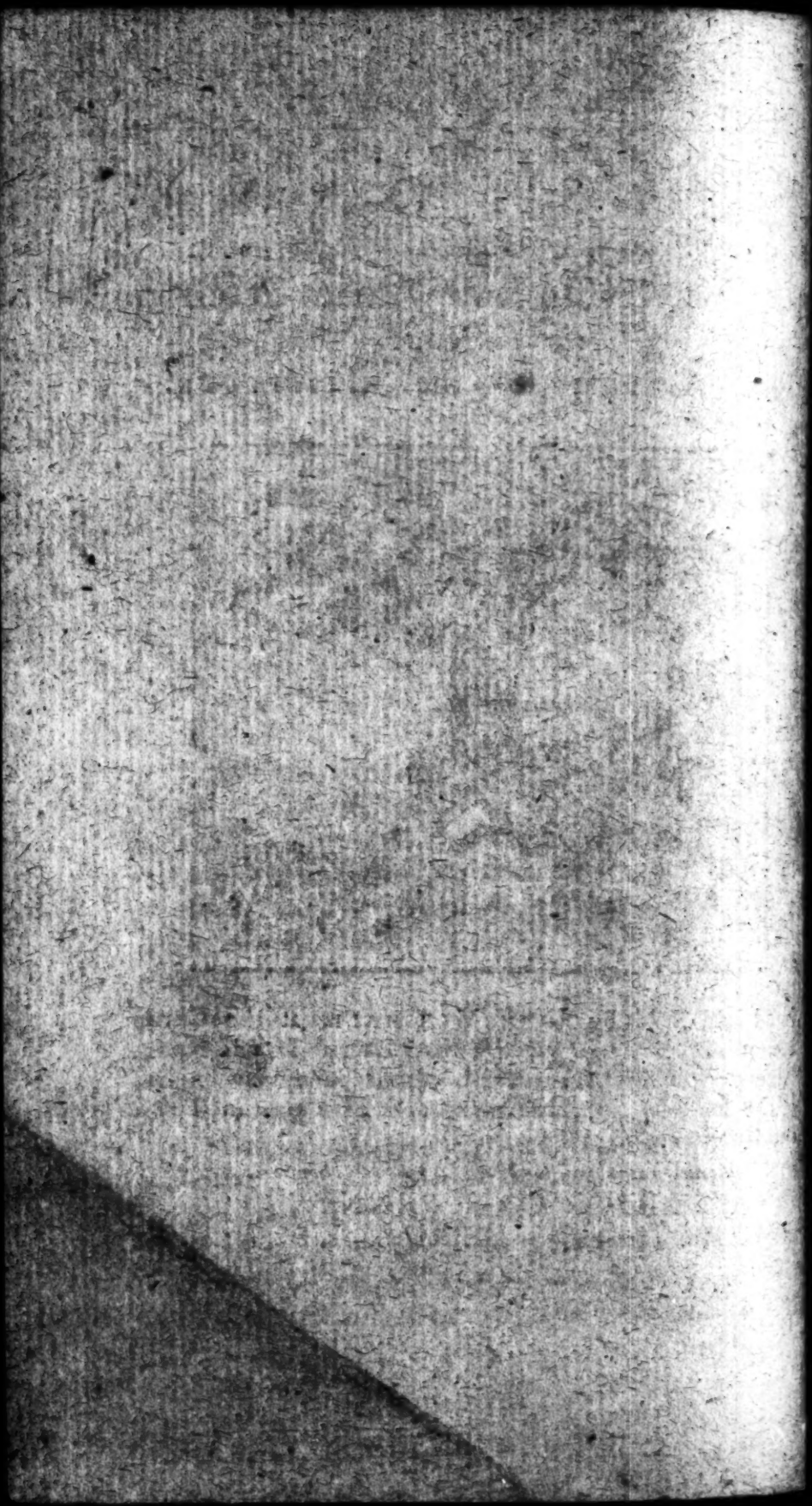

THE

HISTORY, &c.

HOW eaſily does pride find its way into the human heart! Not content with ſetting an unue value upon thoſe good qualities we may chance o poſſeſs, we glory in our very follies. Jonathan Griffin could boaſt neither of wealth, learning, r abilities, but his heart ſwelled with pride on eing able to ſay, that he had never been in the Vorkhouſe, and never been indebted to his pariſh, hough it would ſeveral times have been more o his honour had he thankfully accepted the reief it would have afforded him.

Jonathan was very young when he adopted the otion, that he ſhould bring a diſgrace upon his faily if he was ſeen in the garb of the charity ſchool. His too indulgent father, who was himſelf a little

tinctured with pride, yielding to his ſuggeſtions, and refuſed an offer that had been made him of a preſentation for his ſon. Thus did Jonathan throw away his only opportunity for learning.

The ſame pride continued with him when he was married, and had a family of his own, though he himſelf daily felt the inconvenience of not being able to read, and though, with all his induſtry, he was unable to afford to pay for his children's ſchooling, yet his wife could by no arguments perſuade him to ſuffer them to go to a Sunday ſchool, which had lately been eſtabliſhed.

"*A Sunday ſchool*," he ſaid, "was only a meaner kind of *charity ſchool*, and nothing ſhould prevail upon him to ſend his children to the one, when he had thought it beneath his own dignity to go to the other."

When Mrs. Griffin was near the eighth lying-in, ſhe earneſtly beſought her huſband to allow the three youngeſt children to be ſent to the workhouſe during the time of her confinement. "I tell you I won't," was the conſtant anſwer ſhe received. "It ſhall never be ſaid that *Jonathan Griffin* let his boys go to the poor-houſe, no not for an hour." Nor was ſhe more ſucceſsful, when ſhe would have obtained permiſſion to have applied to the committee for an order for the doctor's attendance. "We ſhall do very well," ſaid he ſurlily, "without ſinking ourſelves to be *pariſh*-poor."

Mrs. Griffin's life was the ſacrifice to her huſband's pride. The children deprived of their uſual pittance of food, as their father's wages for the preceding week had been nearly expended upon his wife, were unuſually clamorous. The mournful moan of "mammy, mammy, I am hungry," and

he inceſſant cries of the youngeſt, diſtracted the mind of their mother, and whenever for a moment's quiet ſhe ſent them to play in the road, her fears were continually on the alarm leſt ſome accident ſhould befal them. She had had a dreadful lying-in, but would moſt probably have recovered could ſhe have been kept tolerably quiet and compoſed; but the inceſſant agitation of her mind brought on a fever and delirium, of which ſhe expired in leſs than a week.

Jonathan, though not poſſeſſed of acute ſenſibility, could not behold, without anguiſh, the lifeleſs body of the wife with whom he had lived peaceably for above ten years, and who had, moſt probably, expired in conſequence of his obſtinate refuſal of her requeſt. To defray the expences of the funeral his own and his children's bed, his wife's cloaths, and the little property they had poſſeſſed, were all either pawned or ſold.

The great bell was tolled. The corpſe was carried into the church; the coffin had plate, nails, and handles, and Jonathan flattered himſelf, that by theſe uſeleſs marks of reſpect, he atoned to his wife for having been the occaſion of her death.

The perſon who was overſeer for that year was well acquainted with Jonathan. He took into conſideration his pitiable ſituation, and promiſed to endeavour to procure for him a nurſe from the workhouſe to take care of his children. Jonathan contemptuouſly rejected the offer. His neighbours had repeatedly heard his reſolution, and he knew if he broke it he ſhould be the laughing ſtock of the village. He therefore perſiſted in maintaining, that he would ſee his children periſh before he would conſent to receive the ſmalleſt aſſiſtance from his pariſh.

His father-in-law was much diſpleaſed with hi conduct; however, for his deceaſed daughter's ſake he determined to take the little infant home wit him, rather than it ſhould die from neglect. H could ill afford ſuch an addition to his family but Jonathan cared not to whom he was obliged nor to what ſtreights he drove his relations, ſo tha his own pride was not offended by publickly receiv ing relief.

When Jonathan Griffin was about ſixty years o age he was attacked by a violent fever, which ſettled in his leg, and obliged him to go upo crutches. As he was totally diſabled from labour and had no proſpect of recovery, the workhouſe ap peared to be his only aſylum, but ſtill he declare he would never darken its doors. By what means was he aſked, did he then propoſe to maintai himſelf? He would be a beggar. By the ſide of public road he took his daily ſtand, and repeated to every paſſenger in the ſame whining tone "Pray beſtow your charity, Pray remember th poor lame." By this contemptible mean, the man who for his induſtry had been regarded through life in a reſpectable light, gained a ſcanty and pre carious livelihood in his old age.

As he was one morning hobbling over a ſtyle to go to his uſual ſtation, he was overtaken by a feeble old man, with whom he had once been acquainted "I wiſh you joy maſter," ſneeringly ſaid Griffin "I ſee by your dreſs you are in your old lodging "Mean ſpirited wretch!" continued he, muttering be tween his teeth.

"I am in the workhouſe for the third time," re turned the old man mildly, "and I need not bluſh to ſay ſo, becauſe I can truly declare, I never entered

when I could honeſtly maintain myſelf elſewhere. he firſt time I had had a long illneſs, which reduc- l me to a ſkeleton. My poor wife ſlaved as long ſhe could, but at laſt ſhe too fell ſick. Our ildren pined away for want of nouriſhment. Our ends had at firſt been very good to us, but they uld not ſupport us for ever. I ſaw no reſource t the pariſh. I got ſome one to repreſent our ſe at the committee, and beg for preſent relief. he anſwer was that we muſt come into the houſe. his vexed me a good deal. It was what none of ur family had ever been reduced to. I turned my es wetted with tears to my wife, and aſked her hat we ſhould do? "Why let us go by all means, Villiam," ſaid ſhe. "If we ſtay here we muſt arve, or run ſo deep in debt that we ſhall never able to pay off our ſcores. What if we *are* the ſt of our family to go into a workhouſe, is it t becauſe we are reduced to greater ſtreights an any of them have been before us? But we ed not be aſhamed of being poor, when we do t become ſo by our own fault. Let us be aſham- of our proud hearts, William, which make us ſo un- lling to accept the relief which God has provided r us." My heart ſunk within me when I ſaw the tle bits of furniture we had ſcraped together lling off for little or nothing; but my wife was of hopeful turn, and ſhe cheered up my ſpirits. Never fear my William," ſaid ſhe, "but we ſhall well. We have a view before us of food and iment for the preſent day, and we need not take ought for the morrow. If we recover, William, od who provides for the little birds of the air, will doubt bleſs our induſtry, and give us a reſting ace likewiſe."

"I who had been uſed to a ſnug home found
workhouſe, where all ages and all tempers were me
together, an uncomfortable place, and more tha
once I was tempted to repine at my hard fate. Bu
my dear Bet ſupported her own ſpirits, and kept u
mine alſo. For the beſt part of a twelve month
continued ill, and my wife gathered ſtrength bu
ſlowly. As ſoon as we were tolerably recovere
we hired a room. I ſet to work diligently, an
every week we laid by a trifle towards buying ſom
furniture. By the help of a good friend we wer
juſt ſettled again as comfortably as ever, when th
dreadful fire conſumed every thing we were worth
and we only eſcaped with our lives. What no
could be done but return to the workhouſe, th
worthy gentleman who had aſſiſted us ſo much b
fore being as great a ſufferer as ourſelves. W
did not this time however continue there long.
ſubſcription was raiſed for the poor that had bee
burnt out of their houſes, and we were again place
in a home of our own. But the fright had take
ſuch an effect upon my wife that ſhe was never we
after, and in a few months I buried her." "Y
buried her!" retorted Griffin, "you lying raſcal, yo
may well be aſhamed of owning it. You kno
very well you ſuffered her to be buried like a dog, a
ter ſhe had been ſo good a wife to you, and yo
had always ſhammed ſo much fondneſs for her."

"*Shammed* a fondneſs for her!" repeated Peterſo
as the tear ſtarted to his eye, and the blood moun
ed to his aged cheek," "God in heaven kno
how I loved her! I would have given my life
have procured her eaſe while ſhe lived, or to hav
ſhewn reſpect to her memory when ſhe was dea
And if I *had* her buried by the pariſh I know it w

hat ſhe would herſelf have wiſhed for, rather than
at I ſhould have taken the bread from her chil-
ren's mouths."

"And pray, if ſhe had begged the contrary on her
eath-bed, as moſt people would have done in the
me ſituation, and as *I* ſhould for one, how would
ou have managed then?"

"Why, in that caſe, I won't anſwer for what I might
ave done; but now that I can reflect ſoberly, I do
ot think I ought to have acted otherwiſe than I
id.

"I know very well, Maſter, on our firſt agony of
iſtreſs we are apt to loſe all command of ourſelves;
e are ready to promiſe the dying any thing,
hough it ſhould be ever ſo much out of our power
o perform; and when all is over, if one comes in
nd ſays, I think it will look like a reſpect to your
ife's memory to order the funeral ſo and ſo, we
re ready to agree to it directly, though it ſhould
e ever ſo unſuitable to our condition. And this
akes me think we ought to weigh the matter well
eforehand. We ſhould conſider that there is a
uty owing to the living as well as the dead; that
uneral expences are apt to mount up more than
e are aware of; and that it is as wrong at one
ime as at another, to ſpend more than we can ho-
eſtly afford. Then too we ſhould think, that all
we can do is as nothing to the corpſe, which can feel
either pleaſure nor pain, and which will ſoon
crumble into duſt, though we ſhould put it in the
handſomeſt and ſtrongeſt coffin in the world. And
I do think, if we were accuſtomed to reaſon in this
manner, it would prevent us from going to an un-
due expence about our relation's funeral; and ſtill

more, burdening thoſe we leave behind, by giving any extravagant directions about our own.

"Indeed," continued Peterſon, "I think it is but natural that the dead bodies of thoſe we have loved ſhould be very dear to us; for, to be ſure, we are apt to ſet a great ſtore by the moſt trifling thing that has belonged to them; but one would ſuppoſe from the behaviour of ſome people, that they valued the *caſe*, as I may call it, of their friends, the more for its being empty.

"A father, who has not cared for making his child's life miſerable, nor for bringing him up in ſuch courſes as has ſent his ſoul to damnation, will not for the world that the body ſhould be put in a pariſh coffin. But I cannot think it is only out of reſpect to our *relations* that we ſo often make a point of having ſo many fine funerals. It is to gratify *our own pride*, neighbour; for we poor people, though we may not care to own it, are in ſome things as proud as the proudeſt of the rich."

"It would certainly be quite out of character for great people to bury their relations in a mean ſhabby way, as if they grudged them the laſt expence they could be at on their account; but, in my opinion it is quite as much out of character, for the poor to ſpend every farthing upon a fine funeral. They ſhould bury, as they ſhould do every thing elſe, as cheaply, and with as little pomp as they can; and thoſe who have *nothing* ſhould be thankful that their friends may yet be decently put under ground; and if people will deſpiſe them for ſubmitting to what they cannot help, they muſt bear it in the manner the Bible teaches us to bear being ſpoken ill of when we do not deſerve it."

Jonathan ſmiled contemptuouſly; but a gentle-

an coming by at that inſtant, he held out his hat, iſplayed the wound in his leg, and implored a alfpenny. Peterſon looked aſtoniſhed. "Is it oſſible," ſaid he, "that you who appear to deſpiſe me for taking refuge in the workhouſe, hould yourſelf be a beggar?"

"I cannot deny," replied Griffin, "that I live pon charity, and indeed I do not know why I hould be aſhamed of it A beggar is his own an, but he that goes into the workhouſe is a ſlave. s long as I had the uſe of my limbs I worked hard or the public, and now I think I have a claim upon eir compaſſion."

"Not only upon their compaſſion, but upon eir juſtice, good friend," ſaid Peterſon," "and e are ſo happy as to live in a country where your laim will be attended to. It is the chief glory of ld England that ſhe makes a proviſion for her oor. Not an Engliſhman need periſh for want of eceſſaries, for every Engliſhman belongs to ſome ariſh, and in every pariſh there is houſe, firing, ood and cloaths provided for thoſe who have no eans of a maintainance. All who are themſelves ne degree above poverty, let them be ever ſo ggardly, are forced to draw their purſe ſtrings nd contribute their ſhare to the poors' rate.

"Thoſe who come upon the pariſh, whilſt they are apable of providing for themſelves, have cauſe nough to be aſhamed. They are little better than hieves in my opimon; for they are taking away hat of right belongs to the ſick and aged, and to oor deſerted infants. As you very well know, ough I was almoſt blind, I ſupported myſelf for ears by making cabbage nets, and ſelling them bout the country; but a ſtroke of the palſy in my right

hand quite diſabled me. My ſon indeed, the only child I have left, would fain have taken me to live with him; but he has a wife and ſix children, and, God knows, they fare but badly as it is; I could not bear the thoughts of making them pinch the harder for my ſake, ſo I came into the workhouſe, not as to a priſon, but as to the habitation provided for me by the goodneſs of God, and the juſtice of my country. Such little jobs as are ſuited to my preſent ſtate are given me to do, ſo that in part I ſtill *earn* the bread I eat; and when I can do nothing more, I ſhall be maintained in conſideration of my paſt ſervices. As to you, Jonathan, when you ſtroll about as a beggar, you throw yourſelf out of the protection of the laws. Every, pariſh officer has a right to ſend you to the houſe of correction as a vagarant, and ſo has each individual of whom you beg. You mingle with, and encourage a diſſolute, worthleſs ſet of people, who impoſe upon the public with falſe ſtories, and chooſing rather to be maintained in idleneſs than to work; and how can *you*, who are too proud to accept of that relief which your country offers, bear to aſk a favour of every ſtranger who paſſes, who knows nothing of you, on whom you have no claim whatever, and who very probably deſpiſes you in his heart, and if he gives you a halfpenny 'tis odds but he did it to get rid of your noiſy importunity?"

Jonathan ſeemed ſomewhat ſtruck with this queſtion; but mumbled out, that pariſh officers, and maſters and miſtreſſes of workhouſes were ſuch a brutiſh ſet, that he could not endure the idea of having any thing to do with them.

"I do believe," replied Peterſon, "that there are many bad among them; and ſo there are among

all deſcriptions of people. It is the fault of the *poor* that there are not more of them good: for if they were contented, and grateful, and induſtrious, gentlemen of character and abilities, and who have time to ſee that things are properly done, would not be ſo often diſcouraged from attending to pariſh buſineſs. Not that I mean to ſay it is right for them, when they are choſen church-warden or overſeer to ſhift the burden from their own ſhoulders, and appoint ſome one to ſerve for them, who perhaps is not fitted for the taſk; or in ſuch low circumſtances as to be under a great temptation to be diſhoneſt; becauſe a Chriſtian ſhould never mind his own trouble when he has an opportunity of being uſeful to his fellow-creatures.

"As to the maſters and miſtreſſes of workhouſes, theirs, though an important, is a very unthankful office. Moſt who come to be under their government ſeem to think it a hardſhip that they are reduced ſo low, and are therefore diſpoſed to murmur and find fault with every thing, and to tranſgreſs the rules of the houſe. It is not then to be wondered at, that the heads of ſuch an unruly ſet ſhould acquire by degrees a hardneſs of heart, that they ſhould ſpeak ſharply, when they find their mild commands are not obeyed; and from hearing a great many complaints that have no foundation, ſhould pay too little attention to thoſe that are real. However, there are ſtill many excellent maſters of workhouſes; I bleſs God that ours is one of the right ſort. In this reſpect he is a man of good underſtanding, and of thorough Chriſtian principles. He treats us all with humanity and tenderneſs, and ſees that juſtice is done to the meaneſt. To be ſure he is ill ſpoken of by ſome; but it is only by thoſe

audacious ſpirits who cannot bear the leaſt contro
or by thoſe who would be diſcontented ever
where."

"If all the money," ſaid Griffin, "that is give
in poors' rates was diſpoſed of properly, there
would be enough to ſupport us at our own homes
without our mixing with ſuch a crew."

"I doubt that very much Jonathan," replied hi
companion, "the money that will maintain a grea
number very comfortably together, will go but
little way if they are all to pay rent, and keep houſ
ſeparately. However, I do not pretend to ſay, tha
the poors' rates are always laid out to the very be
advantage. Now, for inſtance, I could not hel
thinking, that the firſt time I applied for relief,
they would have aſſiſted me at home for a fe
weeks, it would have burdened them much le
than taking me and all my family into the houſe
but perhaps they ſaw good reaſons for acting a
they did. They might think it likely my illne
ſhould be of very long ſtanding; or they migh
find it a bad preſident to help out of the houſe, a
giving encouragement to thoſe to come upon th
pariſh who could ſhift for themſelves.

"Or ſuppoſing after all they judged ill, we mu
not expect our veſtry to be made up of angels. A
to thoſe who *wilfully defraud the poor*, the ſin,
fear, lies heavy at their door. We live in a wicke
world, Jonathan, and there are abuſes in ever
thing. But *half a loaf is better than no bread*; an
it ſeems ſtrange for us to ſet our faces againſt th
good that is offered, becauſe we fancy that was a
managed as it ought to be we might be relieved i
a more comfortable manner. I never wiſhed t
perſuade you, that a workhouſe was the happie

birth in the world, but I do think it is greatly preferable to *ſtarving*, or *ſtealing*, or *begging*. And we have the comfort to reflect, that though it has many inconveniences, we have but to bear them for a ſhort time before we return to our own home."

"When old men, like you and I," ſaid Griffin, "go into a workhouſe, I cannot ſay, I ſee much proſpect of our ever having a home of our own again."

"True," anſwered Peterſon, "not in this world; but this world is not the chriſtian's home. And we who are old have the faireſt proſpect of being ſoon at liberty in the beſt ſenſe of the word. I am obliged to mingle with many worthleſs people, and every day to hear and ſee things which I cannot approve. It will not be ſo, I comfort myſelf with reflecting, when I get to my "*Father's houſe*." I ſhall then be in ſa large ſociety, but there will be no brawls, nor diſturbance, nor wickedneſs. When I am inclined to be diſſatisfied with the hours, or the food, I ſay to myſelf, the time for repoſe and pleaſure is not yet quite come, in a little time I ſhall be at home, then I ſhall be troubled no more, but have every thing my heart can deſire. Thus I dwell on the joys that await me, and in the mean time I eat my morſel with a cheerful heart, thanking my God who has preſerved me all my life, that he has provided for me ſuch an aſylum in my old age.

A. R.

THE END.

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